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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN CROATIA AND TO FACILITATE ITS RECOVERY

Letter dated 20 October 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Croatia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a facsimile letter dated 20 October 1992, from Mr. Hrvoje Sarinic, Prime Minister of Croatia.

We would kindly request that this letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 144.

[Signed] Mario NOBILO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 20 October 1992 from the Prime Minister of Croatia to the Secretary-General

Today the most important tasks for the Republic of Croatia are peace and reconstruction.

The population and the Government of the Republic of Croatia are faced with the immense challenge of providing conditions for the economic and overall recovery of the homeland. The devastation of war has involved the destruction of many vital industrial facilities, while the transport, telecommunications, power production supply systems and the environment have suffered severe damage. The wounds and the scars of war are still visible everywhere: destroyed bridges, arable fields full of mines, destroyed villages and towns, defaced monuments of culture, demolished airports. The figure related to war damage in the Republic of Croatia - about US$ 21 billion as of June 1992 - is the best proof of Croatia's current predicament.

Today the Republic of Croatia is bearing the burden of the greatest refugee crisis in Europe after the Second World War, and unfortunately the end of the stream of refugees is not yet in sight.

The economic reconstruction of the country, the return of the refugees and displaced persons to their homes, the recovery of industrial production, the reopening of communications, the rehabilitation of the environment, the renewal of agricultural production and the opening of the market are goals of strategic importance not only for the future of Croatia but also for the stabilization of conditions in the greater European area. Post-war reconstruction and the attachment of full priority to economic development are unavoidable factors within the system of security and stability in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe.

Wishing to leave the period of war to history and to turn to the reconstruction and development of the country, the Government of the Republic of Croatia would like to inform the United Nations General Assembly about the conditions in which the Republic of Croatia is setting out towards the process of reconstruction, and about the material facts - the tragic heritage of the war forced upon Croatia.

Enclosed please find the Assessment of War Damage in Croatia (see appendix).

Hrvoje ŠARINIĆ

APPENDIX

Assessment of war damage in the Republic of Croatia

1. The devastation brought about by war, the destruction of the economy and property, and the aggressor's genocidal actions against the Croatian population and other citizens of the Republic of Croatia have no parallel in the history of Croatia's statehood. As early as the summer of 1990, and especially in 1991, the occupying forces and their local allies occupied about one third of the territory of the Republic, and war operations have affected about 50 per cent of the State territory.

The initial actions of the aggressor in mid-1990 involved the blockade of certain parts of the Republic of Croatia, and the plunder of the property of Croatian companies in the republics of Serbia and Montenegro.

However, the most substantial destruction, associated with the expulsion of the local population, took place from August 1991 until January 1992. From March to September 1992 such actions have been focused on the region of Bosanska Posavina.

As early as late October 1991 the overall magnitude of war damage had reached the figure of US$ 14.5 billion. By late 1991 it had increased to US$ 18.7 billion, and by June 1992 to about US$ 21 billion.

Within the overall damage, direct damage accounts for about 70 per cent, the remainder being attributable to indirect damage.

In terms of the gross domestic product, overall economic activity has dropped dramatically, by about 30 per cent in 1991 and by an additional 25 per cent in 1992. In absolute terms, domestic product decreased from US$ 14 billion in 1990 to US$ 9.7 billion in 1991, and to US$ 7.5 billion in 1992.

War damage has brought about a considerable reduction of fixed assets, i.e., of property. Indirect damage - operating losses - amounted to about US$ 5 billion in 1991. Estimates of the domestic product decrease for the next five years have shown that indirect losses caused by the war, including those incurred thus far, would amount to US$ 15-16 billion, which is an exceptional shock for the economy as a whole and the population.

2. The magnitude of war damage still has to be evaluated. New damage is increasing continuously and has not been recorded to date. Part of the Republic of Croatia is under the blockade of the so-called "SAO Krajina", and is inaccessible. Environmental damage, as well as the greater part of non-material damage, has not yet been recorded. The presentation of damage, therefore, serves as an orientation, although it clearly highlights the structure of the damage and the real consequences.

War damage is typically less the consequence of military operations and much more the outcome of deliberate destruction, including the burning of villages and towns, cultural monuments, and religious buildings (i.e., of civilian buildings), and the massacre of the population.

This gives this war a specific weight and sets it apart from past wars. Mere figures on economic facility destruction do not illustrate adequately the suffering of the people and the complete loss of their property.

In the period from August 1990 to 25 August 1992 5,435 citizens of the Republic of Croatia were killed, and 20,518 wounded; an additional 13,000 persons are still listed as missing.

So far 590 settlements have suffered the consequences of war; out of those, 35 were completely destroyed and burnt down, while 34 suffered extremely heavy damage. These settlements include larger towns such as Vukovar, Gospić, Osijek, Dubrovnik, Slavonski Brod, Vinkovci, Karlovac, Otočac, Pakrac, Lipik etc.

About 210,000 housing units - about 12 per cent of the housing fund - have been destroyed, burnt down or damaged.

On 6 October 1992 the Republic of Croatia provided relief to 336,611 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 263,109 displaced persons from Croatia and 30,326 refugees from Kosovo and Vojvodina.

Over the past 11 months about US$ 360 million have been spent on providing accommodation and food for displaced persons and refugees.

Because of war damage and the related consequences the economy of the Republic has reached the limits of tolerability.

The table lists the estimated war damage. The figures do not include the cost borne by the budget of the Republic, the expenditures incurred by providing relief to refugees and displaced persons, and current indirect damage.

About 30 per cent of industrial facilities have been affected by war activities, damaged or destroyed. This concerns in particular the textile industry, leather and footwear industries, the metalworking industry and shipbuilding.

War damage in the electric power industry and supply amounts to US$ 343.0 million, in the petroleum, natural gas and petrochemical industries to US$ 228.4 million, and in petroleum transport to US$ 9.4 million.

The list of damaged facilities includes 11 thermo- and hydroelectric power plants, 26 transformer stations, 40 high-voltage transmission lines, and 16 power distribution centres.

Assessment of War Damage in Croatia a/

(Millions of United States dollars)

	Direct	Indirect	Total	Structure of the economy (per cent)	Per cent of total damage
Industry	1 600	900	2 500	18.0	12.6
Agriculture and foodstuffs industry	780	520	1 300	9.3	6.5
Forestry and wood and timber industry	787	396	1 183	8.5	6.0
Water resources	150	140	290	2.1	2.5
Transport and communications	1 426	798	2 224	16.0	15.6
Road transport	90	90	180	-	6.9
Road infrastructure	261	215	476	-	2.4
Railways	353	249	602	-	3.0
Ports and river transport	90	10	100	-	0.5
Sea transport and seaports	38	67	105	-	0.5
Air transport	94	30	124	-	0.5
Postal services, telecommunications, and radio-television	500	137	637	-	3.2
Trade	20	900	920	6.6	4.6
Hotel, catering and tourist trade	230	1 480	1 710	12.3	-
Housing and communal public utilities	3 800	-	3 800	27.2	19.2
The economy	8 793	5 134	13 927	100.0	70.2
Welfare	100	1 000	1 100		5.6
Education, culture, sport	2 500	-	2 500		12.6
Health care	2 300	-	2 300		11.6
Public services	4 900	1 000	5 900		29.8
Total	13 693	6 134	19 827		100.0

a/ As of late June 1992.

The list of destroyed or war damaged road infrastructure facilities includes 1,870 km of arterial highways (39.5 per cent of the total network) 4,625 km (32.4 per cent) of regional roads, and 4,025 km (31.7 per cent) of local roads. Thirty-three bridges have been destroyed and 24 damaged.

Because the damage suffered by the railway infrastructure, and occupation of part of the Republic, there is no traffic on 37 per cent of railway lines. Destroyed or damaged facilities include 45 km of track, 635 km of serial contact lines, 18 railway bridges and 66 railway stations; 92 locomotives, 476 passenger cars and 1,445 freight cars were destroyed, damaged or stolen.

Because of devastation and destruction 224 post offices (20 per cent) have been closed down; 223 telephone exchanges (31 per cent) are out of operation; telecommunications have been completely disrupted at 28 nodal points (22 per cent); almost 200,000 telephone subscribers in Croatia have been excluded from the Croatian telecommunications network.

Nine major hospitals have been destroyed, as well as about 280 smaller health-care facilities.

Eighty-one preschool facilities, 204 primary school buildings, 61 secondary school buildings, and 17 university college buildings and campuses have been either destroyed or damaged.

More than 300 churches and 200 cultural monuments of the highest category have suffered complete destruction.

The damage to the environment, wildlife and livestock is inestimable. Several national parks and nature reserves, e.g. the Plitvice Lakes, the Krka river, Lonjsko Polje, Kopački Rit marshes etc., have also felt the ravages of war.

The total magnitude of damage in public services amounts to US$ 5.9 billion, US$ 4.9 billion being accounted for by direct damage.

If one includes the expenditures borne by the budget of the Republic, and the cost of relief for refugees and displaced persons, total damage would amount to about US$ 21 billion, or US$ 4,500 per capita.